

Great Scenes from Shakespeare's Plays

John Green and Paul Negri





p. 9 Romeo and Juliet

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from
Shakespeare's
Plays



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Note

The great English poet and playwright William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, was in business as a tanner, merchant, and landowner, and achieved considerable success, becoming an important man in the community. Although not substantiated by historical record, it is likely that young Shakespeare attended the local King's New School and received a sound grammar school education based on Latin and the ancient classics. In 1582, at the age of 18, Shakespeare married Ann Hathaway. The couple lived in Stratford and had three children. Between 1585 and 1592, virtually nothing is known of Shakespeare's life. It has been conjectured that he possibly worked as an assistant schoolmaster and at some point became an apprentice actor.

Contemporary records indicate that by 1592 Shakespeare was in London and already enjoying considerable success as an actor and playwright. Working with the leading theater company the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later known as the

King's Men), Shakespeare prospered both artistically and financially. By 1600, he was generally recognized as the leading dramatist of his day. Around 1610, he retired to Stratford and lived the life of a country gentleman. He died there in 1616.

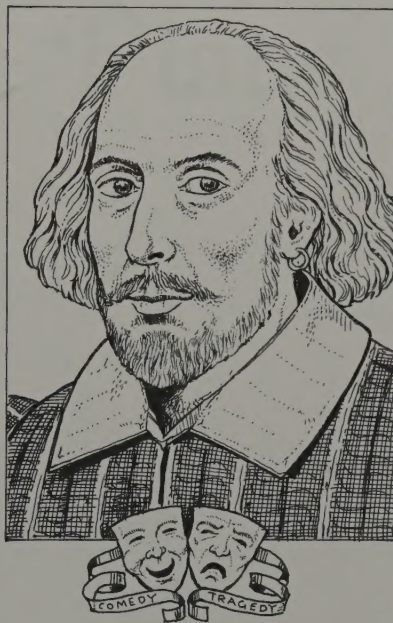
Shakespeare's tragedies, comedies and historical plays are universally acknowledged to be among the supreme master-

pieces of world literature. Presented here are scenes to color and textual excerpts to read, ranging in their variety from Hamlet's profound meditations in the famous graveyard scene to the comic antics of Nick Bottom and his friends in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

After reading these excerpts, you may well want to read some of these plays in their entirety. While the plays

are a pleasure to read, they are even better to watch performed. There are frequent stage productions and fine movie versions too (many available at your local video store).

Many fine editions of Shakespeare's plays are available, including Dover editions, listed on p.60.



Great Scenes
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Hamlet

Hamlet, the prince of Denmark, grieving over the sudden death of his father the king, is confronted by the ghost of the king himself, who reveals that he was actually murdered by his brother Claudius. Claudius has not only ascended to the throne, but married Hamlet's mother, the queen. Charged by the ghost of his father to avenge the heinous crime, Hamlet agonizes in doubt and hesitation, attempting to verify the truth of the charges. In a dueling exhibition arranged by the treacherous Claudius, Hamlet is mortally wounded, but kills the king before he dies, avenging his father's murder.

Act V, Scene 1 (*Hamlet contemplating the skull of Yorick*)

GRAVEDIGGER. Here's a skull, now. This skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

HAMLET. Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER. A whoreson mad fellow's it was. Whose do you think it was?

HAMLET. Nay, I know not.

GRAVEDIGGER. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! A poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the King's jester.

HAMLET [*Takes the skull*]. This?

GRAVEDIGGER. E'en that.

HAMLET. Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chop-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come. Make her laugh at that. Prithee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

HORATIO. What's that, my lord?

HAMLET. Dost thou think Alexander looked o' this fashion i' the earth?

HORATIO. E'en so.

HAMLET. And smelt so? Pah! [*Puts down the skull.*]

HORATIO. E'en so, my lord.

HAMLET. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why, may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

HORATIO. 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.

HAMLET. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it, as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust, the dust is earth, of earth we make loam, and why of that loam, where-to he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

Imperious Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,

Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,

Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!



Hamlet with the skull of Yorick, the jester, who entertained him as a small boy at his father's court. Hamlet is moved to a contemplation of mortality and the common fate all share in death.

Hamlet

Act V, Scene 2 (*Hamlet and Laertes are wounded in their duel.
The Queen drinks from a poisoned wine goblet meant for Hamlet.*)

HAMLET. How does the Queen?

KING. She swoons to see them bleed.

QUEEN. No, no, the drink, the drink—O my dear Hamlet—
The drink, the drink! I am poison'd. [Dies.]

HAMLET. O villany! Ho! Let the door be lock'd.
Treachery! Seek it out. [Exit OSRIC; LAERTES falls.]

LAERTES. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain.
No medicine in the world can do thee good;
In thee there is not half an hour of life.
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd.
I can no more. The King, the King's to blame.

HAMLET. The point envenom'd too? Then, venom, to thy work.
[Stabs the KING.]

ALL. Treason! treason!

KING. O, yet defend me, friends. I am but hurt.

HAMLET. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?
Follow my mother. [KING dies.]

LAERTES. He is justly served.
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me. [Dies.]

HAMLET. Heaven make thee free of it. I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched Queen, adieu!
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, Death,
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead,
Thou livest. Report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

* * *

HAMLET. O, I die, Horatio.
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited. The rest is silence. [Dies.]

HORATIO. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.



Hamlet duels with Laertes, whose father Hamlet had accidentally killed. Seeking revenge, in conspiracy with the King, Laertes uses an unprotected sword with a poisoned tip. In the contest, both Hamlet and Laertes are mortally wounded by the weapon.

Romeo and Juliet

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's early tragedies and one of the greatest love stories in world literature. Romeo and Juliet, both in their teens, fall passionately in love, despite the bitter feud between their families, the Capulets and the Montagues. Conflict, confusion, and mishaps lead ultimately to their deaths, a tragedy that reconciles the two families at last.

Act I, Scene 5 (*Romeo dances with Juliet at the Capulet's ball*)

ROMEO [*To a Servingman*]. What lady's that, which doth enrich
the hand

Of yonder knight?

SERVANT. I know not, sir.

ROMEO. O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!

It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night

Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;

Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!

So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,

As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.

The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,

And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.

Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!

For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

* * *

ROMEO [*To JULIET*]. If I profane with my unworthiest hand

This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,

My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand

To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,

Which mannerly devotion shows in this;

For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,

And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROMEO. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO. O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;

They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO. Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

Thus from my lips by thine my sin is purged. [*Kissing her.*]

JULIET. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO. Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged!

Give me my sin again.

JULIET. You kiss by the book.

NURSE. Madam, your mother craves a word with you.

ROMEO. What is her mother?

NURSE. Marry, bachelor,

Her mother is the lady of the house,

And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous:

I nursed her daughter, that you talk'd withal;

I tell you, he that can lay hold of her

Shall have the chinks.

ROMEO. Is she a Capulet?

O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.



Romeo and Juliet first meet at the Capulet's ball and, unaware of each other's identities, fall instantly in love.

Romeo and Juliet

Act II, Scene 2 (*Romeo and Juliet in the Capulet's orchard*)

JULIET. O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO [*Aside*]. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET. 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

ROMEO. I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET. What man art thou, that, thus bescreen'd in night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET. My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

ROMEO. Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

JULIET. How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO. With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls,
For stony limits cannot hold love out:
And what love can do, that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

JULIET. If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO. Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.



Romeo secretly enters the Capulet's orchard hoping to see Juliet. She appears on the balcony and, not knowing Romeo is present, declares her love for him. Romeo reveals himself and the two swear eternal love.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

This comedy, set in ancient Athens, presents the adventures and misadventures of young lovers and the fairy folk of the forest. The fair Hermia is in love with Lysander, but her father wishes her to marry Demetrius. Hermia and Lysander flee to the woods, where Oberon, King of the fairies, is quarreling with his wife Titania. Also in the woods are a group of artisans, led by the weaver Nick Bottom, rehearsing a play they are to present at the wedding of Athenian Duke Theseus and Hyppolyta, Queen of the Amazons. Oberon's use of a love potion causes comic confusion among all concerned. All turns out right in the end, however, with everyone finding (and marrying) their true love.

Act III, Scene 1 (*Her eyes anointed with the love potion, Titania falls in love with Bottom, on whom the sprite Puck has placed the head of a jackass*)

TITANIA. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity, that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

TITANIA. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM. Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate:
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

FIRST FAIRY. Ready.

SECOND FAIRY. And I.

THIRD FAIRY. And I.

FOURTH FAIRY. And I.

ALL. Where shall we go?

TITANIA. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes;
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.



On orders from Oberon, the sprite Puck anoints the eyes of Titania, queen of the fairies, with a love potion, making her fall in love with the first creature she sees on awakening, who happens to be the weaver Nick Bottom, magically transformed by Puck into a man with the head of a jackass.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Act V, Scene 1 (*Nick Bottom and friends performing the story of Pyramus and Thisbe*)

WALL. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

DEMETRIUS. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

THESEUS. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

[*Re-enter PYRAMUS.*]

PYRAMUS. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!
[WALL holds up his fingers.]

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!

But what see I? No Thisbe do I see.

O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!

Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THISBE. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

PYRAMUS. No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisbe's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

[*Re-enter THISBE.*]

THISBE. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

PYRAMUS. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face.
Thisbe!

THISBE. My love thou art, my love I think.

PYRAMUS. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

THISBE. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

PYRAMUS. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THISBE. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYRAMUS. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THISBE. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYRAMUS. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THISBE. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.



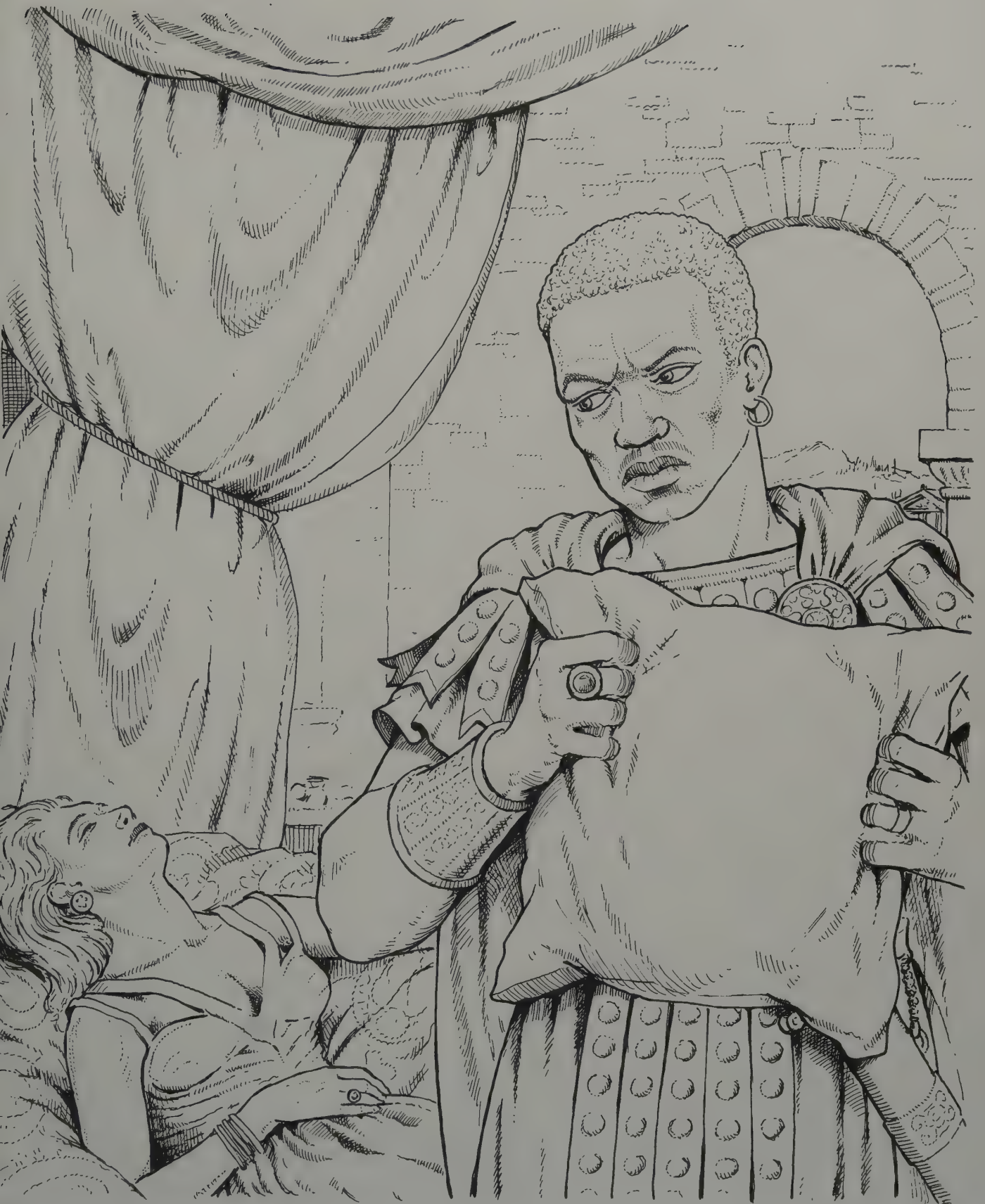
Nick Bottom and the other artisans perform a comically ridiculous version of the tragic story of two doomed lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe, at the wedding of Athenian Duke Theseus and Hyppolyta.

Othello

This powerful tragedy recounts the story of Othello, a Moor (or African), a general in the army of Venice. Misled by his officer Iago, who seeks revenge for being passed over for promotion, Othello is persuaded that his wife, Desdemona, a woman of unquestionable virtue, is being unfaithful to him. Mounting jealousy and rage climax in his murdering Desdemona. On learning of Iago's treachery and his wife's innocence, he atones for his crime by killing himself.

Act V, Scene 2 (*Othello confronts Desdemona in her bedchamber*)

OTHELLO. It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul:
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!
It is the cause. Yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow
And smooth as monumental alabaster.
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the light, and then put out the light:
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
Should I repent me: but once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd the rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It must needs wither: I'll smell it on the tree. [Kissing her.
Ah, balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword! One more, one more:
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee,
And love thee after: one more, and this the last:
So sweet was ne'er so fatal. I must weep,
But they are cruel tears: this sorrow's heavenly;
It strikes where it doth love. She wakes.
DESDEMONA. Who's there? Othello?
OTHELLO. Ay, Desdemona.
DESDEMONA. Will you come to bed, my lord?
OTHELLO. Have you pray'd to-night, Desdemona?
DESDEMONA. Ay, my lord.
OTHELLO. If you bethink yourself of any crime
Unreconciled as yet to heaven and grace,
Solicit for it straight.
DESDEMONA. Alas, my lord, what may you mean by that?
OTHELLO. Well, do it, and be brief; I will walk by:
I would not kill thy unprepared spirit;
No, heaven forbid! I would not kill thy soul.
DESDEMONA. Talk you of killing?
OTHELLO. Ay, I do.
DESDEMONA. Then heaven have mercy on me!
OTHELLO. Amen, with all my heart!



Othello is convinced by the evil officer Iago that his wife has been unfaithful to him. Desdemona protests her innocence, but driven by jealousy and rage, Othello smothers her with a pillow.

Much Ado About Nothing

In this comedy set in 13th-century Italy, Claudio is in love with the virtuous Hero, but through the vengeful schemes of Don John becomes convinced that she is unfaithful to him. Instead of marrying her, he shames her at the church before her family and friends by accusing her of being a wanton woman. This so upsets Hero that she faints as if dead and Claudio leaves, believing her to be so. After Don John's treachery is revealed, Claudio repents and agrees to marry anyone Hero's father, Leonato, wishes him to marry. In the end, Hero and Claudio are reunited and happily plan to marry.

Act V, Scene 4 (Claudio is presented with the woman he is to marry)

DON PEDRO. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

LEONATO. Good morrow, prince; good morrow, Claudio:

We here attend you. Are you yet determined
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

CLAUDIO. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.

LEONATO. Call her forth, brother; here's the friar ready.

[Exit ANTONIO.]

DON PEDRO. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

CLAUDIO. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
Tush, fear not, man; we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee;
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

BENEDICK. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low;
And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

CLAUDIO. For this I owe you: here comes other reckonings.

[Re-enter ANTONIO, with the Ladies masked.]

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

ANTONIO. This same is she, and I do give you her.

CLAUDIO. Why, then she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

LEONATO. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before that friar, and swear to marry her.

CLAUDIO. Give me your hand: before this holy friar,
I am your husband, if you like of me.

HERO. And when I lived, I was your other wife: [Unmasking.
And when you loved, you were my other husband.]

CLAUDIO. Another Hero!

HERO. Nothing certainer:

One Hero died defiled; but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.

DON PEDRO. The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

LEONATO. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.



Leonato presents a masked lady to Claudio who has promised to marry whoever Leonato wishes him to. Unmasking herself, the lady is revealed to be Hero, alive and well after all, and Claudio rejoices and swears his love for her.

Julius Caesar

The assassination of Julius Caesar is the central event in this tragedy. Roman republicans led by Cassius, and reluctantly joined by Brutus, fearing Caesar's ambitions, assassinate him in the senate. Caesar's friend, Marc Antony, is allowed to deliver a funeral oration and his eloquence turns the public against the conspirators. Cassius and Brutus flee, and after defeat in battle, kill themselves to avoid capture and dishonor.

Act III, Scene 1 (*Pretending to ask pardon for a banished friend, the conspirators surround Caesar*)

CAESAR. Thy brother by decree is banished:
If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,
I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.
Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause
Will he be satisfied.

MATELLUS. Is there no voice more worthy than my own,
To sound more sweetly in great Caesar's ear
For the repealing of my banish'd brother?

BRUTUS. I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Caesar,
Desiring thee that Publius Cimber may
Have an immediate freedom of repeal.

CAESAR. What, Brutus!

CASSIUS. Pardon, Caesar; Caesar, pardon:
As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall,
To beg enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

CAESAR. I could be well moved, if I were as you;
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me:
But I am constant as the northern star,
Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks;
They are all fire and every one doth shine;
But there's but one in all doth hold his place:
So in the world; 't is furnish'd well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive.
Yet in the number I do know but one
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshak'd of motion: and that I am he,
Let me a little show it, even in this;
That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,
And constant do remain to keep him so.

CINNA. O Caesar,—

CAESAR. Hence! wilt thou lift up Olympus?

DECIUS. Great Caesar,—

CAESAR. Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?

CASCA. Speak, hands, for me!

[CASCA first, then the other Conspirators
and MARCUS BRUTUS stab CAESAR.]

CAESAR. Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Caesar! [Dies.]

CINNA. Liberty! freedom! Tyranny is dead!
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.



Caesar is stabbed to death in the senate by Cassius and other republican conspirators. The last to stab him is Brutus, who Caesar had long trusted as a friend.

Julius Caesar

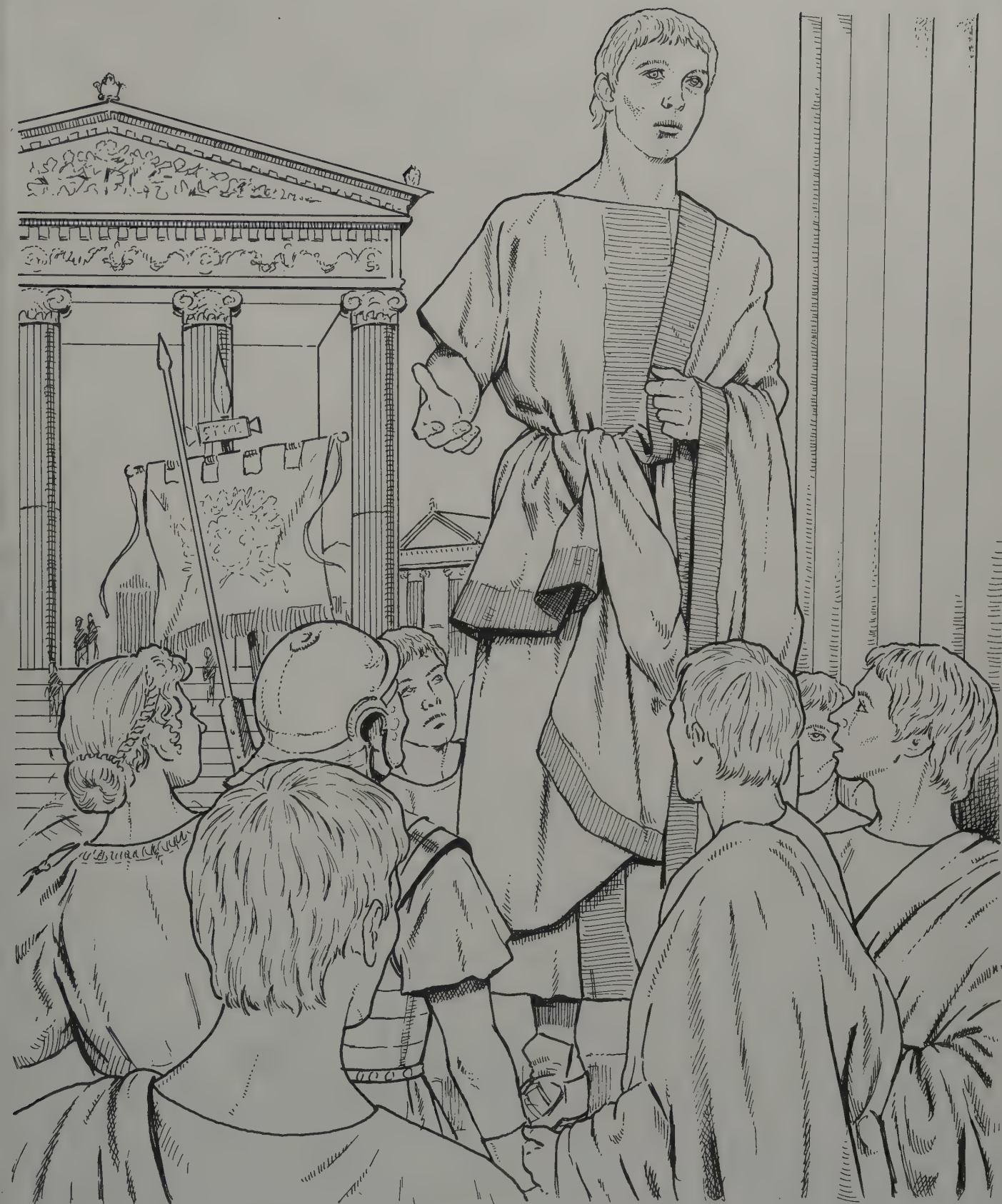
Act III, Scene 2 (*Marc Antony addresses the citizens of Rome*)

ANTONY. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men,—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?
O judgement! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

FIRST CITIZEN. Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

SECOND CITIZEN. If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Caesar has had great wrong.

THIRD CITIZEN. Has he, masters?
I fear there will a worse come in his place.



Marc Antony at the Forum addresses the citizens of Rome over Caesar's body. His brilliant and eloquent oration turns public opinion against the conspirators, who are forced to flee.

Henry IV, Part 1

In an England wracked by strife and civil war, Henry IV is distressed not only by the threat to his throne, but by the irresponsible behavior of his young son Hal. Instead of preparing for his future role as king, Hal spends his time in dissolute living with a group of disreputable companions, headed by John Falstaff, a lovable old rogue, who, although witty and endearing, represents all that Hal must reject in order to achieve maturity and leadership. Hal redeems himself by his brave defense of his father at the Battle of Shrewsbury and begins to display those qualities that will make him a great king.

Act II, Scene 4 (*Prince Hal pretending to be his father the king and Falstaff pretending to be Hal*)

PRINCE. Now, Harry, whence come you?

FALSTAFF. My noble lord; from Eastcheap.

PRINCE. The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

FALSTAFF. 'Sblood, my lord, they are false: nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith.

PRINCE. Swearest thou, ungracious boy? henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace: there is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man; a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villany? wherein villanous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing?

FALSTAFF. I would your grace would take me with you: whom means your grace?

PRINCE. That villanous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

FALSTAFF. My lord, the man I know.

PRINCE. I know thou dost.

FALSTAFF. But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old, the more the pity, his white hairs do witness it; but that he is, saving your reverence, a whoremaster, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! if to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins: but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company: banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

PRINCE. I do, I will.



While civil strife wracks England, young Prince Hal spends his time bantering with the jolly rogue John Falstaff and his disreputable companions at the Boars-head tavern.

Henry the Fifth

A continuation of the Henry IV plays, *Henry the Fifth* portrays Prince Hal as a brave and daring king, concerned with his hereditary claim to the throne of France. The conflict between Henry and the French king, Charles, along with his son the Dauphin, culminate in the landmark battle of Agincourt. Vastly outnumbered and on foreign soil, Henry and his army display remarkable bravery and skill and defeat the French, who must sue for peace. As part of the peace settlement, Henry marries the French king's daughter, Katherine.

Act IV, Scene 3 (*King Henry tells his comrade Westmoreland
not to wish for better odds at the battle of Agincourt*)

WESTMORELAND. O that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work to-day!

KING HENRY. What's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:
If we are mark'd to die, we are enow
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honour.
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.

* * *

Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is call'd the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall see this day, and live old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day: then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing cups freshly rememb'ed.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered;
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.



Henry urges on his troops at the battle of Agincourt. Though outnumbered five to one and exhausted from previous battles, the English under Henry's brave leadership, defeat the French.

The Taming of the Shrew

This early comedy is the classic battle of the sexes. Set in Padua, Italy, it is the story of a rich man with two daughters, Bianca, the younger, gentle and sweet, and Katharina, the elder, ill-tempered and shrewish. Bianca cannot marry until a husband is found for Katharina. Petruchio, a wealthy man from Verona, comes to Padua in search of a rich wife and agrees to court Katharina. Although Katharina detests him, she must obey her father's wish and marry him. Petruchio goes about "taming" Katharina in a comic battle of wits and wills. In the end, Katharina becomes the perfect wife, Petruchio a good husband, and Bianca marries the man of her choice.

Act II, Scene 1 (*Katharina's and Petruchio's first meeting*)

- PETRUCHIO. Good morrow, Kate; for that's your name, I hear.
KATHARINA. Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing:
They call me Katharine that do talk of me.
PETRUCHIO. You lie, in faith; for you are call'd plain Kate,
And bonny Kate and sometimes Kate the curst;
But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,
Kate of Kate Hall, my super-dainty Kate,
For dainties are all Kates, and therefore, Kate,
Take this of me, Kate of my consolation;
Hearing thy mildness prais'd in every town,
Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,
Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,
Myself am mov'd to woo thee for my wife.
KATHARINA. Mov'd! in good time: let him that mov'd you hither
Remove you hence: I knew you at the first
You were a moveable.
PETRUCHIO. Why, what's a moveable?
KATHARINA. A join'd-stool.
PETRUCHIO. Thou hast hit it: come, sit on me.
KATHARINA. Asses are made to bear, and so are you.
PETRUCHIO. Women are made to bear, and so are you.
KATHARINA. No such jade as you, if me you mean.
PETRUCHIO. Alas! good Kate, I will not burden thee;
For, knowing thee to be but young and light—
KATHARINA. Too light for such a swain as you to catch;
And yet as heavy as my weight should be.
PETRUCHIO. Should be! should—buzz!
KATHARINA. Well ta'en, and like a buzzard.
PETRUCHIO. O slow-wing'd turtle! shall a buzzard take thee?
KATHARINA. Ay, for a turtle, as he takes a buzzard.
PETRUCHIO. Come, come, you wasp; i' faith, you are too angry.
KATHARINA. If I be waspish, best beware my sting.
PETRUCHIO. My remedy is then, to pluck it out.
KATHARINA. Ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.
PETRUCHIO. Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting? In
his tail.
KATHARINA. In his tongue.
PETRUCHIO. Whose tongue?
KATHARINA. Yours, if you talk of tails: and so farewell.
PETRUCHIO. What, with my tongue in your tail? nay, come again,
Good Kate; I am a gentleman.



The lovely but shrewish Katharina exchanges insults with her husband-to-be Petruchio. In a merry battle of the sexes, Petruchio "tames" the shrew and both end up happy in their marriage.

Twelfth Night

Confusion caused by concealed identities is at the heart of this comedy. Viola and Sebastian, twin sister and brother, are separated in a shipwreck. Each thinking the other is dead sets off on their own. Viola, to find employment, is forced into masquerading as a man and is employed by Duke Orsino as a page. Olivia, whom the Duke is courting, falls in love with the supposed page. Meanwhile, Sebastian too has been rescued and comes to visit Duke Orsino. The appearance of the twin brother causes much confusion among an assortment of other characters in the play, but all is resolved in the end when Viola reveals her true identity.

Act V, Scene 1 (*Viola reveals her identity to her twin brother Sebastian, the Duke and Olivia*)

ANTONIO. How have you made division of yourself?
An apple, cleft in two, is not more twin
Than these two creatures. Which is Sebastian?

OLIVIA. Most wonderful!

SEBASTIAN. Do I stand there? I never had a brother;
Nor can there be that deity in my nature,
Of here and every where. I had a sister,
Whom the blind waves and surges have devour'd.
Of charity, what kin are you to me?
What countryman? what name? what parentage?

VIOLA. Of Messaline: Sebastian was my father;
Such a Sebastian was my brother too,
So went he suited to his watery tomb:
If spirits can assume both form and suit,
You come to fright us.

SEBASTIAN. A spirit I am indeed;
But am in that dimension grossly clad
Which from the womb I did participate.
Were you a woman, as the rest goes even,
I should my tears let fall upon your cheek,
And say, "Thrice-welcome, drowned Viola!"

VIOLA. My father had a mole upon his brow.

SEBASTIAN. And so had mine.

VIOLA. And died that day when Viola from her birth
Had number'd thirteen years.

SEBASTIAN. O, that record is lively in my soul!
He finished indeed his mortal act
That day that made my sister thirteen years.

VIOLA. If nothing lets to make us happy both
But this my masculine usurp'd attire,
Do not embrace me till each circumstance
Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump
That I am Viola: which to confirm,
I'll bring you to a captain in this town,
Where lie my maiden weeds; by whose gentle help
I was preserved to serve this noble count.
All the occurrence of my fortune since
Hath been between this lady and this lord.



Viola, dressed as a man, reveals her true identity to her astonished twin brother Sebastian, the Duke, and Olivia. Olivia, who had fallen in love with Viola when she thought he was a man, now realizes that she really loves her twin brother Sebastian. The Duke, seeing Viola as a woman, falls in love with her.

Macbeth

Set in Scotland in the 11th century, *Macbeth* is a story of intrigue and murder. Macbeth, after triumphing in battle defending King Duncan, meets up with three witches who predict he will be king. He tells his wife of this prediction and she, even more ambitious than Macbeth himself, convinces him to murder Duncan, plotting to blame others, and seize the throne. Once the bloody deed is done, Macbeth lives in fear of discovery. Duncan's sons, suspecting foul play, gather an army against Macbeth and eventually kill him in battle, avenging their father and regaining the throne.

Act I, Scene 3 (*Macbeth and his friend Banquo meet three witches on the heath*)

MACBETH. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

BANQUO. How far is 't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' earth,
And yet are on 't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

MACBETH. Speak, if you can: what are you?

FIRST WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

SECOND WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of
Cawdor!

THIRD WITCH. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

BANQUO. Good sir, why do you start; and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' th' name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not.
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

FIRST WITCH. Hail!

SECOND WITCH. Hail!

THIRD WITCH. Hail!

FIRST WITCH. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

SECOND WITCH. Not so happy, yet much happier.

THIRD WITCH. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

FIRST WITCH. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

MACBETH. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the Thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.

[*Witches vanish.*]



Macbeth comes upon three witches who predict he will be king. Spurred on by their words and the ambition of his wife, Macbeth stabs the king to death, commits other bloody murders, and usurps the throne.

Macbeth

Act V, Scene 1 (*A doctor and a lady of the court observe Lady Macbeth sleepwalking*)

GENTLEWOMAN. Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise;
and upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

DOCTOR. How came she by that light?

GENTLEWOMAN. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

DOCTOR. You see, her eyes are open.

GENTLEWOMAN. Ay, but their sense are shut.

DOCTOR. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

GENTLEWOMAN. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

LADY MACBETH. Yet here's a spot.

DOCTOR. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

LADY MACBETH. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—One: two: why, then 'tis time to do 't.—Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him.

DOCTOR. Do you mark that?

LADY MACBETH. The Thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

DOCTOR. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

GENTLEWOMAN. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

LADY MACBETH. Here 's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

DOCTOR. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

GENTLEWOMAN. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

DOCTOR. Well, well, well,—

GENTLEWOMAN. Pray God it be, sir.

DOCTOR. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

LADY MACBETH. Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale.—I tell you yet again, Banquo 's buried; he cannot come out on 's grave.

DOCTOR. Even so?

LADY MACBETH. To bed, to bed! there 's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand. What 's done cannot be undone.—To bed, to bed, to bed! [Exit LADY.



Lady Macbeth, who convinced her husband to assassinate the king, is driven mad by guilt and fear. She wanders the halls of the castle complaining that she cannot wash the blood from her hands.

Richard III

Richard III features one of the most memorable villains in literature. The story focuses on the struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster for the English throne. Richard, who is a hunchback, plots against his brothers, including King Edward IV, to gain the throne. In the process he is responsible for the murders of his foes and former friends alike, including the two young princes in the Tower of London. In the end he is killed in battle by the Earl of Richmond, Henry Tudor, who ascends the throne.

Act V, Scene 3 (*Richard addresses his troops before the battle of Bosworth Field*)

KING RICHARD [*Reads*]. "Jockey of Norfolk, be not so bold,
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold."
A thing devised by the enemy.
Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge:
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe:
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell;
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.

His oration to his Army

What shall I say more than I have infer'd?
Remember whom you are to cope withal;
A sort of vagabonds, rascals, and runaways,
A scum of Bretons, and base lackey peasants,
Whom their o'er-cloyed country vomits forth
To desperate ventures and assured destruction.
You sleeping safe, they bring to you unrest;
You having lands and blest with beauteous wives,
They would restrain the one, distain the other.
And who doth lead them but a paltry fellow,
Long kept in Bretagne at our mother's cost?
A milk-sop, one that never in his life
Felt so much cold as over shoes in snow?
Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again,
Lash hence these overweening rags of France,
These famish'd beggars, weary of their lives,
Who, but for dreaming on this fond exploit,
For want of means, poor rats, had hang'd themselves:
If we be conquer'd, let men conquer us,
And not these bastard Bretons, whom our fathers
Have in their own land beaten, bobb'd, and thump'd,
And in record left them the heirs of shame.
Shall these enjoy our lands? lie with our wives?
Ravish our daughters? [*Drum afar off.*] Hark! I hear their drum.
Fight, gentlemen of England! fight, bold yeomen!
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!
Spur your proud horses hard, and ride in blood;
Amaze the welkin with your broken staves!



The evil Richard III, who rose to the English throne through plots, conspiracies, and murder, is slain at the battle of Bosworth Field by Henry Tudor, the Earl of Richmond.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

This comedy features Sir John Falstaff, the merry rogue from the earlier *Henry IV* plays. His fortunes at low ebb, Falstaff plots to win the affections of two wealthy married women, Mistress Ford and Mistress Page, by writing them both identical love letters. The two women discover his plot, however, and together decide to teach Falstaff a lesson by leading him on and then tricking him to reveal his unscrupulous behavior before everyone. At the same time they teach their husbands a lesson about jealousy.

Act III, Scene 3 (*Falstaff is hidden in a basket of dirty linen*)

MISTRESS PAGE. O Mistress Ford, what have you done? You 're shamed, y' are overthrown, y' are undone for ever!

MISTRESS FORD. What's the matter, good Mistress Page?

MISTRESS PAGE. O well-a-day, Mistress Ford! having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

MISTRESS FORD. What cause of suspicion?

MISTRESS PAGE. What cause of suspicion! Out upon you! how am I mistook in you!

MISTRESS FORD. Why, alas, what's the matter?

MISTRESS PAGE. Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman that he says is here now in the house by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence: you are undone.

MISTRESS FORD. 'Tis not so, I hope.

MISTRESS PAGE. Pray heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here! But 'tis most certain your husband's coming, with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why, I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here, convey, convey him out. Be not amazed; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

MISTRESS FORD. What shall I do? There is a gentleman my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house.

MISTRESS PAGE. For shame! never stand 'you had rather' and 'you had rather:' your husband's here at hand; bethink you of some conveyance: in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceived me! Look, here is a basket: if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking: or—it is whiting-time—send him by your two men to Datchetmead.

MISTRESS FORD. He's too big to go in there. What shall I do?

FALSTAFF [*Coming forward*]. Let me see 't, let me see 't, O, let me see 't! I'll in, I'll in. Follow your friend's counsel. I'll in.

MISTRESS PAGE. What, Sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters, knight?

FALSTAFF. I love thee. Help me away. Let me creep in here. I'll never—
[*Gets into the basket, they cover him with foul linen.*]



Mistress Ford and Mistress Page hide Falstaff in a basket of dirty linen to conceal him from Mistress Ford's husband who has arrived on the scene. The basket is taken out by servants and Falstaff is dumped in the river along with the laundry.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

Act V, Scene 5 (*Falstaff is set upon by others disguised as fairies in the forest*)

MISTRESS QUICKLY. Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,
You moonshine revellers, and shades of night,
You orphan heirs of fixed destiny,
Attend your office and your quality.
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy oyes.

PISTOL. Elves, list your names; silence, you airy toys.
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap:
Where fires thou find'st unrak'd and hearths unswept,
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry:
Our radiant queen hates sluts and sluttery.

FALSTAFF. They are fairies; he that speaks to them shall die:
I'll wink and couch: no man their works must eye.

[Lies down upon his face.]

EVANS. Where's Bede? Go you, and where you find a maid
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy;
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy:
But those as sleep and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides and shins.

MISTRESS QUICKLY. About, about;
Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out:
Strew good luck, ouphees, on every sacred room:
That it may stand till the perpetual doom,
In state as wholesome as in state 'tis fit,
Worthy the owner, and the owner it.
The several chairs of order look you scour
With juice of balm and every precious flow'r:
Each fair instalment, coat, and sev'ral crest,
With loyal blazon, evermore be blest!
And nightly, meadow-fairies, look you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring:
Th' expressure that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see;
And 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' write
In em'rald tufts, flow'rs purple, blue, and white;
Like sapphire, pearl and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee:
Fairies use flow'rs for their charactery.
Away; disperse: but till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom round about the oak
Of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.

EVANS. Pray you, lock hand in hand; yourselves in order set;
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,
To guide our measure round about the tree.
But, stay; I smell a man of middle-earth.

FALSTAFF. Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy, lest
he transform me to a piece of cheese!



Persuaded by Mistress Ford to disguise himself as Herne, a mythical hunter with horns, and meet her in the forest, the terrified Falstaff is set upon by the ladies, their husbands, and friends dressed as fairies and spirits, who have fun at his expense before revealing themselves and upbraiding Falstaff for his amorous plots.

The Merchant of Venice

This play is a love comedy with serious overtones. Antonio borrows money from the Jewish moneylender Shylock in order to help his friend Bassanio woo the lovely Portia. Shylock's terms are that if Antonio does not pay him back when the debt is due he may take a pound of flesh anywhere from Antonio's body. While Bassanio succeeds in winning Portia's hand, Antonio meets misfortune and cannot repay Shylock. Shylock demands his pound of flesh, but Portia, disguised as a man, argues the case before the Venetian court, saving Antonio's life. Shylock is foiled and all the lovers are united in a happy ending.

Act IV, Scene 1 (Portia confronts Shylock in court)

PORTIA. I am informed thoroughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?
DUKE. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.
PORTIA. Is your name Shylock?
SHYLOCK. Shylock is my name.
PORTIA. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.—
You stand within his danger, do you not?
ANTONIO. Ay, so he says.
PORTIA. Do you confess the bond?
ANTONIO. I do.
PORTIA. Then must the Jew be merciful.
SHYLOCK. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.
PORTIA. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.
SHYLOCK. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.



In the Court of Justice, Portia, disguised as a lawyer, pleads Antonio's case before Shylock, who insists on his pound of flesh. The moneylender is outwitted by Portia and Antonio is saved.

King Lear

In this great tragedy, old King Lear of ancient Britain, after falling out with his youngest daughter Cordelia, divides his kingdom between his two older daughters, who with monstrous ingratitude abuse him and plot his downfall. Reduced to wandering homeless and half-mad with the Fool, his faithful jester, Lear is rescued by Cordelia and the army of her husband, the King of France. Although his villainous daughters destroy each other in the end, the good Cordelia falls victim to them and Lear dies despairing and brokenhearted.

Act I, Scene 1 (*Lear disowns his daughter Cordelia*)

- LEAR. To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
No less in space, validity and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now, our joy,
Although the last, not least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interest'd, what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.
- CORDELIA. Nothing, my lord.
- LEAR. Nothing!
- CORDELIA. Nothing.
- LEAR. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.
- CORDELIA. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more nor less.
- LEAR. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
Lest it mar your fortunes.
- CORDELIA. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.
- LEAR. But goes thy heart with this?
- CORDELIA. Ay, good my lord.
- LEAR. So young, and so untender?
- CORDELIA. So young, my lord, and true.
- LEAR. Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower:
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
By all the operation of the orbs
From whom we do exist and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied and relieved,
As thou my sometime daughter.



Refusing to flatter Lear with overblown expressions of love, as her sisters have done, Cordelia is foolishly disowned by her father. He divides his kingdom between the two unscrupulous older daughters, who abuse and desert him.

King Lear

Act III, Scene 2 (*Lear on the heath, raging against the storm*)

LEAR. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germins spill at once
That make ingrateful man!

FOOL. O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than
this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in, and ask thy
daughters' blessing: here's a night pities neither wise man nor
fool.

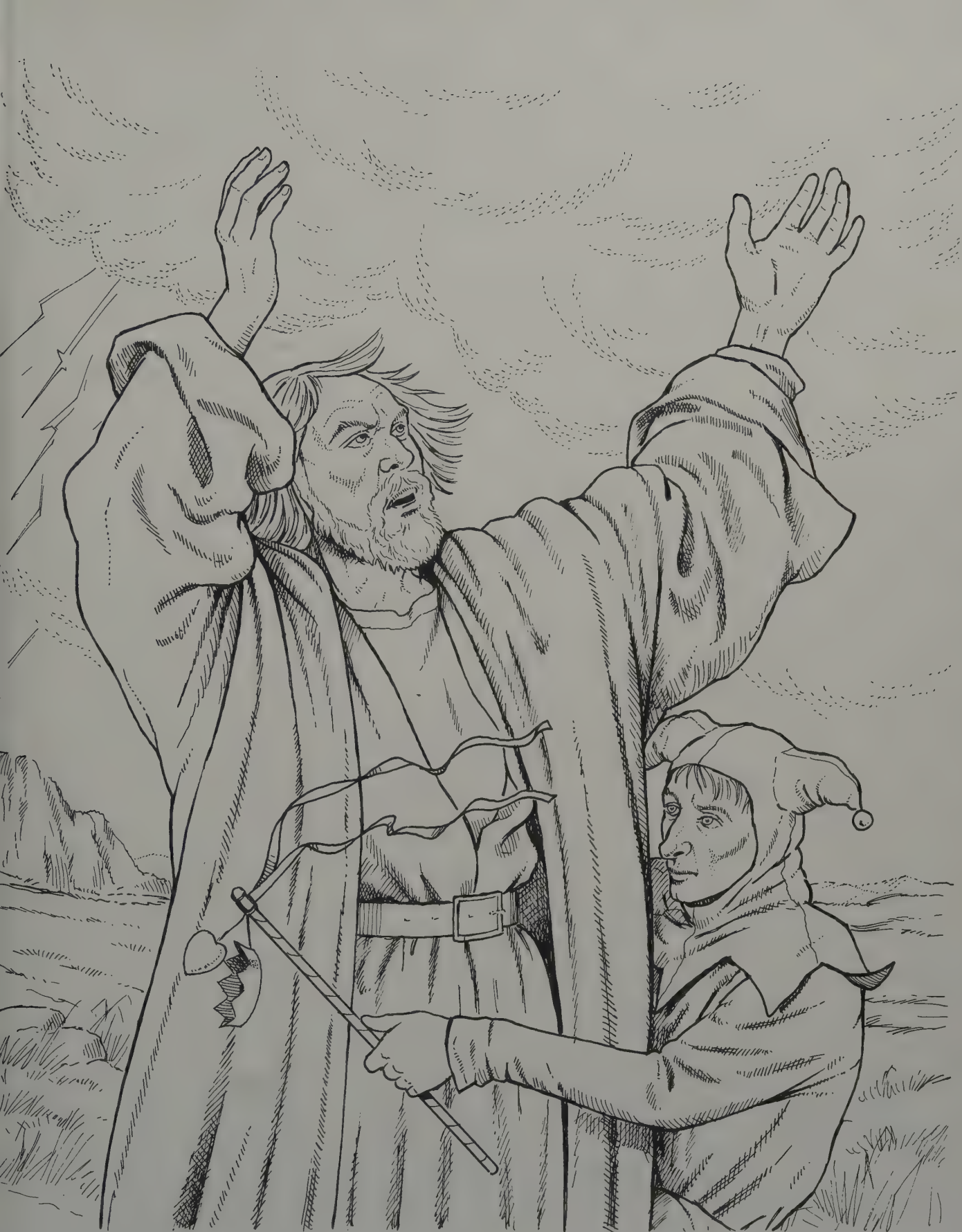
LEAR. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man:
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 't is foul!

FOOL. He that has a house to put's head in has a good head-piece.

The cod-piece that will house
Before the head has any,
The head and he shall louse
So beggars marry many.
The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make
Shall of a corn cry woe,
And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a
glass.

LEAR. No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
I will say nothing.



Driven mad by the ingratitude and abuse of his daughters, Lear wanders on the heath, raging against fate in the midst of a howling storm, while his Fool tries to persuade him to find shelter.

As You Like It

A pastoral comedy set in medieval France, *As You Like It* contrasts the worldly life at court with the natural, carefree life in the forest. A duke, deposed by his brother Frederick, has fled with his followers to live in the forest. His daughter, Rosalind, remaining behind to be with her cousin Celia, falls in love with Orlando, the son of Frederick's enemy. Rosalind, disguised as a man, flees to the forest. Joined by Celia, she lives the life of a shepherd. There she encounters Orlando, who has been forced to flee by his unscrupulous brother. Love blossoms among all the characters in the forest, with some complications caused by Rosalind's male disguise. In the end, all the lovers are properly matched, Frederick reforms, and the rightful duke's lands are restored.

Act II, Scene 2 (*Rosalind counsels Orlando*)

ROSALIND. There is a man haunts the forest, that abuses our young plants with carving 'Rosalind' on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles, all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind: if I could meet that fancy-monger, I would give him some good counsel, for he seems to have the quotidian of love upon him.

ORLANDO. I am he that is so love-shaked: I pray you, tell me your remedy.

ROSALIND. There is none of my uncle's marks upon you: he taught me how to know a man in love; in which cage of rushes I am sure you are not prisoner.

ORLANDO. What were his marks?

ROSALIND. A lean cheek, which you have not, a blue eye and sunken, which you have not, an unquestionable spirit, which you have not, a beard neglected, which you have not; but I pardon you for that, for simply your having in beard is a younger brother's revenue: then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied and every thing about you demonstrating a careless desolation; but you are no such man; you are rather point-device in your accoutrements as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other.

ORLANDO. Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love.

ROSALIND. Me believe it! you may as soon make her that you love believe it; which, I warrant, she is apter to do than to confess she does: that is one of the points in the which women still give the lie to their consciences. But, in good sooth, are you he that hangs the verses on the trees, wherein Rosalind is so admired?

ORLANDO. I swear to thee, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that he, that unfortunate he.

ROSALIND. But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?

ORLANDO. Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much.

ROSALIND. Love is merely a madness, and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do: and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel.



In the forest of Arden, Rosalind, disguised as a man, satirically counsels her lover Orlando on how to be cured of the madness of love.

Coriolanus

In this historical tragedy set in third century Rome, Caius Marcius Coriolanus is a brilliant general whose military victories impress the nobility, who want to make him consul. The common people of Rome, however, reject Coriolanus because of his pride, arrogance, and contempt for the ordinary citizen. Rejecting the advice of his family and friends, Coriolanus turns his back on Rome and joins with his former enemy, Aufidius of Antium, to invade and destroy the city. Fearing his ambition, Aufidius goads Coriolanus into a rage before a meeting of their leaders, and, with a group of conspirators, slays him.

Act V, Scene 6 (*Aufidius and Coriolanus before the leaders of Antium*)

AUFIDIUS. You lords and heads o' th' state, perfidiously
He has betray'd your business, and given up,
For certain drops of salt, your city Rome,
I say 'your city,' to his wife and mother;
Breaking his oath and resolution like
A twist of rotten silk, never admitting
Counsel o' th' war, but at his nurse's tears
He whin'd and roar'd away your victory,
That pages blush'd at him and men of heart
Look'd wond'ring each at other.

CORIOLANUS. Hear'st thou, Mars?

AUFIDIUS. Name not the god, thou boy of tears!

CORIOLANUS. Ha!

AUFIDIUS. No more.

CORIOLANUS. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it. Boy! O slave!
Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever
I was forc'd to scold. Your judgements, my grave lords,
Must give this cur the lie: and his own notion—
Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him; that
Must bear my beating to his grave—shall join
To thrust the lie unto him.

FIRST LORD. Peace, both, and hear me speak.

CORIOLANUS. Cut me to pieces, Volscies; men and lads,
Stain all your edges on me. Boy! false hound!
If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioles:
Alone I did it. Boy!

AUFIDIUS. Why, noble lords,
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,
Which was your shame, by this unholy braggart,
'Fore your own eyes and ears?

ALL CONSPIRATORS. Let him die for 't.

SECOND LORD. Peace, ho! no outrage: peace!
The man is noble and his fame folds-in
This orb o' th' earth.

CORIOLANUS. O that I had him,
With six Aufidiuses, or more, his tribe,
To use my lawful sword!

AUFIDIUS. Insolent villain!

ALL CONSPIRATORS. Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him!

[*Draw the CONSPIRATORS, and kill MARCIUS, who falls.*]



Aufidius, fearing Coriolanus' ambition and popularity, goads him into a rage before the leaders in Antium and, with a group of conspirators, slays him.

The Winter's Tale

This play, set in the legendary past, is in equal measure tragedy and comedy. King Leontes, jealous and suspicious by nature, is convinced that his wife Hermione has committed adultery with his best friend Polixenes, and that their child, Perdita, is not his daughter. He orders the infant Perdita abandoned in the wilderness. Hermione, grief stricken, appears to die. Sixteen years later, Perdita, who has been raised by a shepherd, meets the son of Polixenes and the two fall in love. In the end, Perdita's real identity is revealed, and Hermione, who was not dead but in hiding, reappears and all are reconciled with Leontes.

Act II, Scene 3 (*Paula, the wife of Antigonus, presents Leontes with his new-born daughter*)

LEONTES. Force her hence.

PAULA. Let him that makes but trifles of his eyes
First hand me: on mine own accord I'll off;
But first I'll do my errand. The good queen,
For she is good, hath brought you forth a daughter;
Here 'tis; commends it to your blessing. [*Laying down the baby.*]

LEONTES. Out!
A mankind witch! Hence with her, out o' door:
A most intelligencing bawd!

PAULA. Not so:
I am as ignorant in that as you
In so entitling me, and no less honest
Than you are mad; which is enough, I'll warrant,
As this world goes, to pass for honest.

LEONTES. Traitors!
Will you not push her out? Give her the bastard.
Thou dotard! thou art woman-tir'd, unroosted
By thy dame Partlet here. Take up the bastard;
Take 't up, I say; give 't to thy crone.

PAULA. For ever
Unvenerable be thy hands, if thou
Tak'st up the princess by that forced baseness
Which he has put upon 't!

LEONTES. He dreads his wife.

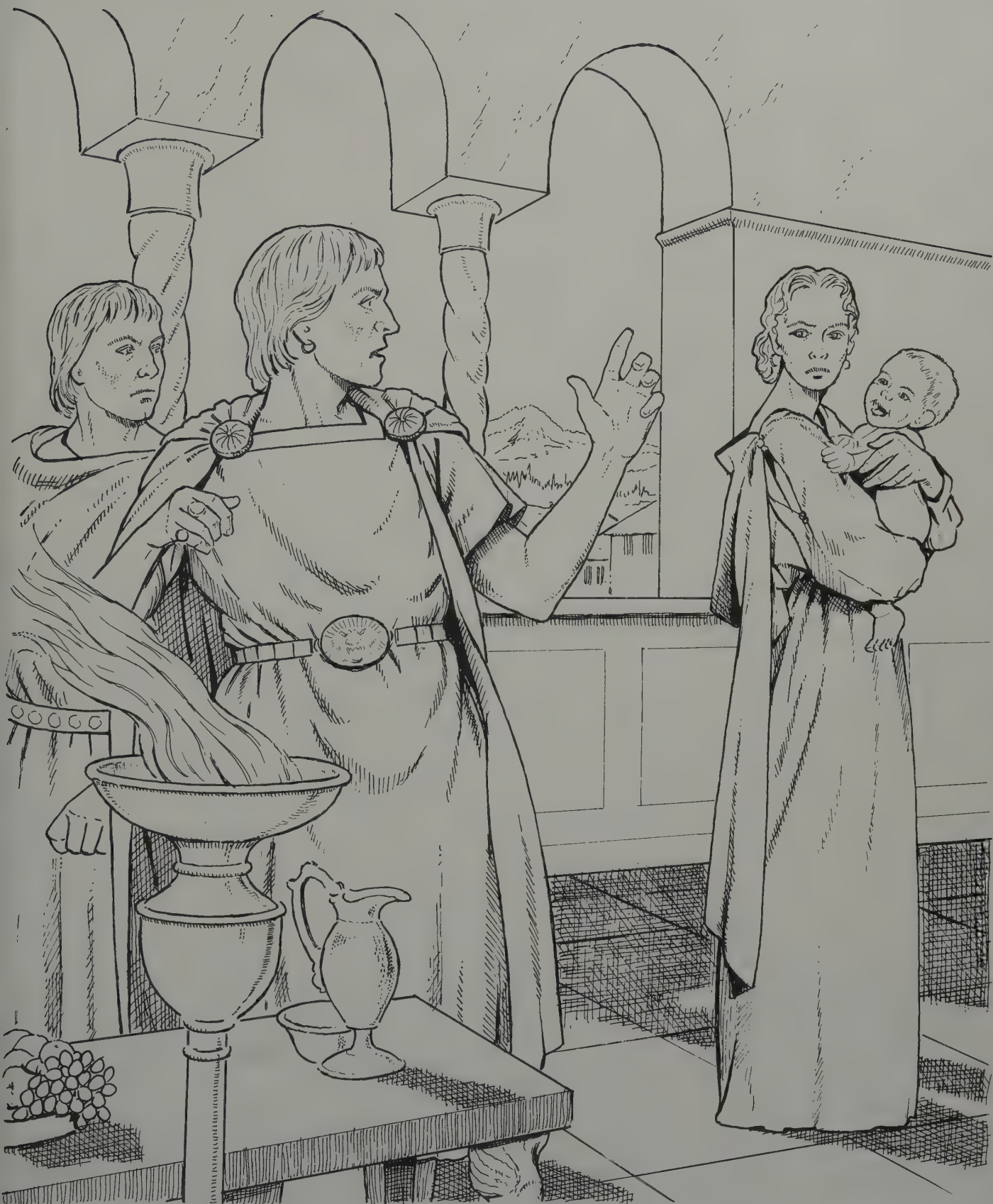
PAULA. So I would you did; then 'twere past all doubt
You'd call your children yours.

LEONTES. A nest of traitors!

ANTIGONUS. I am none, by this good light.

PAULA. Nor I, nor any
But one that's here, and that's himself, for he
The sacred honour of himself, his queen's,
His hopeful son's, his babe's, betrays to slander,
Whose sting is sharper than the sword's; and will not—
For, as the case now stands, it is a curse
He cannot be compell'd to 't—once remove
The root of his opinion, which is rotten
As ever oak or stone was sound.

LEONTES. A callet
Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband
And now baits me! This brat is none of mine;
It is the issue of Polixenes:
Hence with it, and together with the dame
Commit them to the fire!



King Leontes, enraged by his belief that his wife has committed adultery, disowns his infant daughter Perdita, and orders that she be abandoned in the wild and left to die.

The Tempest

The Tempest is a fantasy romance and Shakespeare's last play. Prospero, the deposed duke of Milan, has taken shelter on an enchanted island, where his skill in the magical arts has made the spirits there (among them the good spirit Ariel and the monster Caliban) his servants. When a ship carrying his wicked brother Antonio, as well as Alonso, the king of Naples, and their party, passes by the island, Prospero conjures up a storm to shipwreck them and force them to find their way to him. In the end all are reconciled and Prospero's daughter Miranda marries Alonso's son Ferdinand.

Act II, Scene 2 (*Alonso's servants Trinculo and Stephano ply Caliban with drink*)

CALIBAN. Hast thou not dropp'd from heaven?

STEPHANO. Out o' the moon, I do assure thee: I was the man i' the moon when time was.

CALIBAN. I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee: my mistress show'd me thee, and thy dog, and thy bush.

STEPHANO. Come, swear to that; kiss the book: I will furnish it anon with new contents: swear.

TRINCULO. By this good light, this is a very shallow monster! I afraid of him! A very weak monster! The man i' the moon! A most poor credulous monster! Well drawn, monster, in good sooth!

CALIBAN. I 'll show thee every fertile inch o' th' island; and I will kiss thy foot: I prithee, be my god.

TRINCULO. By this light, a most perfidious and drunken monster! when 's god 's asleep, he 'll rob his bottle.

CALIBAN. I 'll kiss thy foot; I 'll swear myself thy subject.

STEPHANO. Come on, then; down, and swear.

TRINCULO. I shall laugh myself to death at this puppy-headed monster. A most scurvy monster! I could find in my heart to beat him,—

STEPHANO. Come, kiss.

TRINCULO. But that the poor monster 's in drink. An abominable monster!

CALIBAN. I 'll show thee the best springs; I 'll pluck thee berries; I 'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
A plague upon the tyrant that I serve!
I 'll bear him no more sticks, but follow thee,
Thou wondrous man.

TRINCULO. A most ridiculous monster, to make a wonder of a poor drunkard!

CALIBAN. I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;
And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts,
Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
To snare the nimble marmoset; I 'll bring thee
To clustering filberts, and sometimes I 'll get thee
Young scamels from the rock. Wilt thou go with me?

STEPHANO. I prithee now, lead the way, without any more talking. Trinculo, the king and all our company else being drowned, we will inherit here: here; bear my bottle: fellow Trinculo, we 'll fill him by and by again.



Shipwrecked and separated from their comrades, the comical Trinculo and Stephano, servants of Alonso, ply the monster Caliban with drink and plot against Prospero to gain control of the island.

The Tempest

Act IV, Scene 1 (*Prospero conjures up spirits to entertain Miranda and Ferdinand*)

FERDINAND. This is a most majestic vision, and
Harmonious charmingly. May I be bold
To think these spirits?

PROSPERO. Spirits, which by mine art
I have from their confines call'd to enact
My present fancies.

FERDINAND. Let me live here ever;
So rare a wonder'd father and a wise
Makes this place Paradise.

[Enter certain Reapers, properly habited: they join with the Nymphs in a graceful dance, towards the end whereof PROSPERO starts suddenly, and speaks, after which, to a strange, hollow, and confused noise, they heavily vanish.]

PROSPERO *[Aside]*. I had forgot that foul conspiracy
Of the beast Caliban and his confederates
Against my life: the minute of their plot
Is almost come. *[To the Spirits.]* Well done! avoid; no more!

FERDINAND. This is strange: your father's in some passion
That works him strongly.

MIRANDA. Never till this day
Saw I him touch'd with anger so distemper'd.

PROSPERO. You do look, my son, in a moved sort,
As if you were dismay'd: be cheerful, sir.
Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep. Sir, I am vex'd;
Bear with my weakness; my old brain is troubled:
Be not disturb'd with my infirmity:
If you be pleased, retire into my cell,
And there repose: a turn or two I'll walk,
To still my beating mind.

FERDINAND AND MIRANDA. We wish your peace.

[Exeunt.]



Prospero, well schooled in the magical arts, conjures up spirits to entertain his daughter Miranda and her husband-to-be Prince Ferdinand.

Antony and Cleopatra

A tragic tale of ambition, lust and betrayal, this tragedy recounts the downfall of Mark Antony, one of the three rulers of Rome after the death of Julius Caesar. Deeply in love with Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, Antony abandons his wife and battles his partner Octavius for sole rule of Rome. Betrayed by Cleopatra, who withdraws her forces during the critical battle, Antony attempts to kill himself in rage and shame, but still loving Cleopatra begs to be brought to her where he dies in her arms. Defeated and remorseful, Cleopatra also commits suicide by allowing a poisonous asp to bite her. Octavius alone remains to rule Rome.

Act IV, Scene 15 (*Antony dies in the arms of Cleopatra*)

CLEOPATRA. Here's sport indeed! How heavy weighs my lord!

Our strength is all gone into heaviness;
That makes the weight. Had I great Juno's power,
The strong-wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up
And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little—
Wishers were ever fools—O, come, come, come;

[*They heave ANTONY aloft to* CLEOPATRA.]

And welcome, welcome! die where thou hast lived:
Quicken with kissing: had my lips that power,
Thus would I wear them out.

ALL. A heavy sight!

ANTONY. I am dying, Egypt, dying:

Give me some wine, and let me speak a little.

CLEOPATRA. No, let me speak, and let me rail so high,
That the false housewife Fortune break her wheel,
Provoked by my offence.

ANTONY. One word, sweet queen:
Of Cæsar seek your honour, with your safety. O!

CLEOPATRA. They do not go together.

ANTONY. Gentle, hear me:

None about Cæsar trust but Proculeius.

CLEOPATRA. My resolution and my hands I'll trust;
None about Cæsar.

ANTONY. The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at, but please your thoughts
In feeding them with those my former fortunes
Wherein I lived, the greatest prince o' the world,
The noblest, and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman, a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquish'd. Now my spirit is going;
I can no more.

CLEOPATRA. Noblest of men, woo 't die?

Hast thou no care of me? shall I abide
In this dull world, which in thy absence is
No better than a sty? O, see, my women,
The crown o' the earth doth melt. My lord!

[ANTONY dies.]

O, wither'd is the garland of the war,
The soldier's pole is fall'n: young boys and girls
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon.

[*Faints.*]



Antony, having stabbed himself after his betrayal by Cleopatra and defeat in battle by Octavius, dies in Cleopatra's arms.

Antony and Cleopatra

Act V, Scene 2 (*Cleopatra allows the snake to bite her*)

CLEOPATRA. Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me: now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip:
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear
Antony call; I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act; I hear him mock
The luck of Cæsar, which the gods give men
To excuse their after wrath. Husband, I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So, have you done?
Come then and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell.

[*Kisses them. IRAS falls and dies.*]

Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts, and is desired. Dost thou lie still?
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking.

CHARMIAN. Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain, that I may say
The gods themselves do weep!

CLEOPATRA. This proves me base:
If she first meet the curled Antony,
He 'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss
Which is my heaven to have. Come, thou mortal wretch,
[*To an asp, which she applies to her breast.*]
With thy sharp teeth this knot intrinsicate
Of life at once untie: poor venomous fool,
Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak,
That I might hear thee call great Cæsar ass
Unpolicied!

CHARMIAN. O eastern star!

CLEOPATRA. Peace, peace!
Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?

CHARMIAN. O, break! O, break!

CLEOPATRA. As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle,—
O Antony!—Nay, I will take thee too:

[*Applying another asp to her arm.*]

What should I stay—

[*Dies.*]

CHARMIAN. In this vile world? So, fare thee well.
Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;
And golden Phoëbus never be beheld
Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry;
I'll mend it, and then play.



Cleopatra, remorseful over her betrayal of Antony and fearing capture and humiliation by Octavius, commits suicide by allowing a poisonous asp to bite her.

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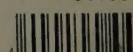
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